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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses one of the major global problems facing humanity today, human rights. It is one of a series of working papers commissioned by the World Order Models Project in its effort to stimulate research, education, dialogue, and political action which will contribute to a movement for a just world order. Human rights have recently become the focus of a global debate, but the concept raises ideological, cultural, and normative issues that the current debate does not sufficiently address. This paper gives the issue of human rights a world-order perspective that is sensitive not only to the question of state power, but also to economic rights, social justice, and the problems of militarization. The paper argues against the tendency to abstract the question of human rights in a manner that makes it irrelevant to the broader, world-order agenda. It is particularly concerned with the linkage between human rights and basic economic needs. (Author/RM)

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Human Rights And World Order Politics

FOUAD AJAMI

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This paper is one in a series of working papers commissioned by the World Order Models Project in its effort to stimulate research, education, dialogue, and political action which will contribute to a movement for a just world order. The papers will deal with major global problems facing humanity, and particularly vexing contemporary political, economic, social, and cultural issues within an analytic and normative framework guided by the concepts and values of peace, economic well-being, social justice, and ecological stability. Special emphasis will be given to the necessity and feasibility of structural transformation of today's fragmented world in order to resolve these problems and achieve just world order results.

A Working Group of the World Order Models Project (WOMP) will use these papers in its new program aimed at publishing a statement in 1980 outlining the strategies for realizing just world order during this century. We invite interested individuals throughout the globe to respond to the various papers either directly to the individual authors or to WOMP. These communications will figure significantly in the WOMP Working Group's final statement. Where appropriate, the responses and critiques will be published in *Alternatives: A Journal of World Policy*.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND WORLD ORDER POLITICS

Fouad AJAMI*

Human rights have lately become the focus of a global debate, but the concept raises profound ideological, cultural and normative issues that the current debate does not sufficiently address itself to. This paper brings to bear on the issues of human rights a world-order perspective that is sensitive, not only to the question of state power, but also to economic rights and social justice, as well as the problem of militarization. The paper argues against the tendancy to abstract the question of human rights in a manner that makes it irrelevant to the broader, world-order agenda. It is particularly concerned with the linkage between human rights, on the one hand, and basic economic needs, on the other.

Introduction

> Our concern for human rights is built upon ancient values. It looks with hope to a world in which liberty is not just a great cause but the common condition.
>
> – US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance

> The question naturally arises how can all this talk about love of peace and love of man by Washington be squared with the fact that it is the United States that is creating and putting into production such a new weapon (the neutron bomb). How can one pose as a champion of human rights and at the same time brandish the neutron bomb that threatens the lives of millions of people? Washington is trying hard to do both. Its propaganda campaign about its love of man is nothing more than rhetoric around a myth.
>
> – Soviet commentator Juri Kornilov

> As long as the nuclear arms race goes on unchecked and as long as no satisfaction is given, in the framework of North-South relations to the just aspirations of the developing countries, the basic requisites will be lacking so that the rights of man, in their wider and truer meaning, may be effectively respected on a global scale. The refusal to facilitate the establishment of a more just and more stable international economic order . . . is a factor which cannot be ignored or overshadowed, in the interest of respect for human rights.
>
> Antonio F. Azereda Da Silveiro, Brazilian Minister of State for External Relations

*Center of International Studies, Princeton University, Princeton.

> Every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition.
>
> Declaration of the World Food Conference (November 1974), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1974

The passages above are a mere sample from the recent verbal celebration of the cause of human rights. They were chosen because they illustrate the ambiguity of the very concept itself, and because they show how states with widely differing ideological orientations and interests have come to package their own political ends in the common wrapping of human rights. Secretary Vance's statement is a standard liberal one: a plea for a world where all peoples can enjoy the same civil liberties and procedural rights which are enshrined in Western liberal constitutions and legal codes.

The Soviet and Brazilian statements indicate that societies which march to different ideological drums have other human-rights concepts of their own. The Soviets dismiss traditional Western freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of movement and assembly – as a bourgeois luxury, a mere form without any substance. The Brazilians (those presently in power, that is) give a higher priority to order than to liberty, and place greater stress on societal development than on individual rights.

Clearly, the Soviet and Brazilian statements are self-serving and somewhat defensive, coming as they do from representatives of regimes which not only violate Western liberal freedoms but ridicule them as well. The practices of both regimes have received extensive publicity of late. Soviet abuses are singled out by US opponents of détente – the George Meanys, Daniel Moynihans and Henry Jacksons – who wish to reassert the differences between 'free' and socialist societies. Brazilian abuses – White inquisitions in the name of order – are detailed by others who are concerned because so much violence, inequality and repression are built into the high-technology/industrial model of economic development.

However self-serving these two statements may be, they do raise questions about the 'completeness' of the liberal conception of human rights, its vulnerability to charges of opportunism and self-righteousness, its capacity to speak to many forms of deprivations of human rights which are embedded in the contemporary global context. The Russian statement contrasts the actuality of the war system with the rhetoric of human rights, stating implicitly that the ability to survive without being cowed by Hobbesian notions of order or threatened by weapons of mass destruction should be recognized as a basic human right. The Brazilian statement responds to perhaps the most deep-seated inconsistency in the liberal tradition by

highlighting the intersection between economic rights, on the one hand, and political rights, on the other.

The fourth passage asserts a 'radical' and novel right – novel, at least, on the level of the global system. Going beyond liberalism's concept of what human rights are about, this statement declares that 'higher' needs – the need for liberty or freedom of expression – are meaningless and abstract unless they are underpinned by primary ones. In the words of the Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted by the World Food Conference, failure to honor such an 'inalienable' right as the right to food 'acutely jeopardizes the most fundamental principles and values associated with the right to life and human dignity as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1]'.

These selections should make it amply clear that the basic definition of human rights is up for grabs, and that Westerners surely hold no monopoly on it. The virtue of President Carter's campaign for human rights lies in the opportunity it presents for a genuinely global debate on the issues involved. Regardless of its motivations and shortcomings, it puts the question of human rights on the global agenda. Some causes have a way of going beyond the limits intended by those who initially embrace them. Indeed, those who raise such issues may later come to be haunted by them as others push these causes in newer and unanticipated directions, deepening and connecting them to other quests and causes. The process that follows usually becomes a test of the sincerity of the initial proponents, and of their willingness to live with the consequences of the very notions which they themselves so enthusiastically acclaimed at an earlier stage.

Human rights issue appears to be of this kind. The contrasting national, ideological and cultural emphases which mark various concepts of human rights, the practical political differences which emerge from each of these concepts, and the common omission of all prevailing approaches to human rights raise a host of questions which this essay seeks to address within a just world-order framework. Thus, the essay has several aims:

1. To illustrate the kinds of cultural and ideological factors and sensibilities which inhere in a heterogenous world and which no discussion of human rights can afford to ignore if it is to be serious and effective.

2. To reevaluate and expand the concept of human rights, broadening it to include both political freedoms and basic economic security.

3. To expand the concept still further by connecting the question of human

[1]The World Food Conference Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition (adopted 16 November, 1974); reproduced in *Alternatives*, **I**, 2–3, 337–342; reprinted in The Right-to-Food Resolution, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Resources, Food, and Energy of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

rights with other world-order concerns, such as militarization and peace, ways to promote humane modernization and development, and fundamental value change.

4. To suggest some appropriate steps that might be taken by global community processes in terms of this broader just world-order concept of human rights.

The first theme will run through the entire discussion; the other three will be taken up directly. One way of approaching the matters noted above is to evaluate in some depth the motivations and shortcomings of the human rights campaign espoused by the Carter Administration and adhered to by 'human rights' groups in the West.

Human rights in political terms

The ideological roots of Carter's foreign policy are to be found in liberal internationalism. That ideology, discredited during the Vietnam war, gained a new lease of life in the aftermath of Nixon's downfall. If Vietnam devastated the liberal internationalists – Mr. Brzezinski (1976) describes it as the Waterloo of that elite – Watergate shattered the balance-of-power world of the Nixon–Kissinger design, and rehabilitated both the pre-Vietnam elite and some of their preferences. The principal assumption of the Nixon–Kissinger policy was that foreign policy stops at the water's edge, that the way America conducts its business abroad has nothing to do with the way it orders its politics at home[2]. The Watergate revelations shattered that premise. Americans began to perceive, dimly and vaguely, that there is indeed an intimate and organic relationship between the things a country does overseas and what happens in its own domestic politics. Watergate produced in the American society an understandable desire to repudiate cynical politics; it made possible the election of Mr. Carter; once again it became respectable to moralize in politics. The politics of 'realism' was discredited; it was now time for the politics of love and compassion. If yesterday America was willing to hail Brazil's concern for human rights, as Mr. Kissinger did during a visit to that country, the Carter Administration was now ready to condemn Brazilian policies. If Mr. Ford had refused to meet with Solzhenitsyn, Mr. Carter and Mr. Mondale were now willing to meet with a less celebrated Soviet dissident. Uruguay, Argentina, and Ethiopia were told that their violations of human rights were high priority

[2] I owe this observation to Professor Ali Mazrui.

concerns on Mr. Carter's agenda. Wilsonian international politics had clearly returned, expressing the certitude of liberal internationalists that diplomacy can create a world which embodies their own particular hopes and preferences.

In essence, the liberal tradition views the state as the principal threat to human well-being. But check the power of state, limit the arbitrary whims of the ruler, and individuals will prosper, goes the liberal refrain. This credo has been liberalism's undeniable contribution to the political heritage of mankind. The enemies of liberalism are on shaky grounds in trying to challenge the liberal record on that front, for no other political system has succeeded as well in checking arbitrary rulers and protecting individual citizens from the heavy hand of political power. This is really the 'comparative advantage' of the liberal West (Falk, 1974). By contrast, Communist regimes in the Second World, and most regimes in the Third World, fail to buffer their subjects from the power of the state. In the Second World, the claims of the state are total, and thus overwhelm individual rights. In the Third World, military regimes, 'oriental despotisms', technocracies committed to modernization, and pathological leaders inflict immense suffering on their populations. When lack of democratic 'forms'—so easy to snub or take for granted—converges with political instability, rising expectations, mass poverty and enormous development tasks, the result is state terror and widespread insecurity. Western liberals are repelled by this landscape. Official terror in the Second and Third World confirms their belief in themselves, and deepens their desire to spread the 'rule of law' to less 'progressive' parts of the world. That is why President Carter's campaign for human rights struck such a receptive chord in the West: This is the West's message and its reassertion seemed to remind people on both sides of the Atlantic of those beliefs and institutions that distinguish the liberal West from others.

It might be well to recall that the European strand of liberalism had a very distinctive attitude to its encounters with alien and culturally different societies. The Europeans frequently spoke of their civilizing mission, of creating civilization out of non-Western barbarism. Ultimately, however, European liberalism rested on a distinction, a caste system if you will, that left most of the world beyond the pale of civilization and the liberal community. European imperialism had to be justified, and the justification was often found in the 'barbarism and cruelty' of non-Western practices: in the Indian custom of Suttee (the burning of widows), in the Ottoman Empire's brutality against the Armenians and the Christians in Greater Syria, in the violence of African tribalism. If non-Westerners could be so brutal when left to themselves, then wasn't the cause of civilization better served by denying such societies the rights of autonomy and self-determination? In short, Europeans did not really believe that their liberalism was a commodity

that could be exported, or their worldview which could be taught and eventually embraced by others. At most, they believed that sustained contact with European culture, institutions, and religions would tame the bestiality of non–Westerners (particularly the intelligentsia and the official classes). However, the boundaries that separated Europe from the rest of the world were forever clear and discernible to the European liberal. John Stuart Mill expressed the views of his contemporaries and of dominant European liberalism when he wrote:

> To suppose that the same international customs, and the same rule of international morality, can obtain between one civilized nation and another; and between civilized nations and barbarians, is a grave error and one which no statesman can fall into . . . . Among many reasons why the same rules cannot be applicable to situations so different, the two following are among the most important. In the first place the rules of ordinary international morality imply reciprocity. In the next place, nations which are still barbarous have not gone beyond the period which it is likely to be for their benefit that they should be conquered and held in subjection by foreigners.

These European liberal prejudices also held true across the ideological aisle. In his essay on British colonialism in India, Marx observed that Britain had a double mission in India: to shatter Asiatic culture, with all its 'idiocy' and 'barbarism', and to lay the foundations for a modern capitalist society which, all evils notwithstanding, was preferable to Asiatic despotism. Sounding very much like any contemporary Western Liberal lamenting the abuses and brutalities of Third World Societies, he observed (Tucker, 1972):

> We must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they had restrained the mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. We must not forget that barbarian egotism which, concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had quietly witnessed the ruin of empires, the perpetuation of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of the population of large towns, with no other consideration bestowed upon them than on natural events, itself the helpless prey of any aggressor who deigned to notice it all. We must not forget that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbounded forces of destruction and rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindustan.

In contrast with European liberals, American liberal internationalists from Wilson and Roosevelt to Kennedy and now Carter have imbued the notion of liberty with a 'timeless and abstract' quality which, in Stanley Hoffmann's words (1976–1977), reflects 'America's deep conviction that the principles, practices, and institutions which have made America great can be used with similar effects elsewhere, that even when the backgrounds are profoundly different, either determined American action or satisfactory compromises will allow the survival and spread of these ideals and patterns.'

All societies can be taught civilized, reasonable rules of conduct, it is assumed. Other peoples need only see the benefits of good government based on liberal virtues, and then incorporate the principles of liberty and private initiative into a modern market system. The American people themselves

widely share the view that if these precepts could produce such miraculous success for Americans, they are bound to work for others as well. Woodrow Wilson's vow to teach South Americans or Filippinos how to elect good governments, his proclamation that the twentieth century was the century of the common man, his call at Versailles for the right to self-determination, stand as the clearest embodiments of American notions of human rights.

Europeans were, of course, skeptical and antagonistic to Wilson's outlook, and a somewhat similar ambivalence and skepticism can be discerned in contemporary European attitudes toward President Carter's human-rights campaign. To Europeans, such outlooks reflect that unique combination of hubris, naiveté, and the tendency to phrase material interest in moral terms, that they have always associated with America. (It should be noted, however, that two recent factors now converge to check that skepticism: rejection of the *realpolitik* of the Nixon-Kissinger years, and renewed concern in Europe with both the power of the Soviet Union and the strength of local Eurocommunists.)

Other voices outside the European liberal tradition, particularly Socialist and/or Third World spokespeople, criticize North American approaches to the human rights question on far more fundamental economic grounds. Liberalism is an ideology of abundance, they say, which is therefore preoccupied only with violations committed by the *state*. It assumes that resourceful individuals and groups can provide for their own well-being as long as they are sufficiently protected from government interference. The result is insufficient attention to *societal* violations which erode the life-chances of millions of people throughout the world. If political rights constitute the 'comparative advantage' of the First World's liberalism, economic rights are its Achilles' heel: it is here that liberalism is most vulnerable as an ideology of the affluent in a world seeking greater material equality. This is why liberalism, at least in its classical variety, has failed to capture the imagination of the poor within and among nations.

'On the whole,' writes Kenneth Boulding in a relevant discussion of the difference between liberal and socialist thought, 'political thought in the West has emphasized form: constitutions and procedures, who is to do things rather than what is to be done. Socialist thought has emphasized substance to the neglect of form...with the result that socialist societies have found themselves defenseless against tyranny.' If socialism has been generally vulnerable to tyranny, liberalism has proven itself quite capable of living with economic inequality and injustice, particularly in the context of global politics.

The mainstream Western notion of human rights confirms the liberal obsession with forms at the expense of substance; it naturally revolves around the kind of freedoms that affluent Westerners hold dear: freedom of

expression, assembly, freedom from arbitrary arrest, from torture. But precious little has been said yet concerning basic rights to at least a minimum standard of living, which would include the right to food, shelter, and work. Freedom House, a New York based organization that monitors civil and political liberties around the world and lists among its trustees Daniel P. Moynihan, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Gardner, and Jacob Javits, expresses typical Western attitudes in its annual 'comparative study of freedom'. This survey ranks nations on a descending scale from 1 ('free',) to 7 (the 'least free'). By Freedom House criteria, South Africa is assigned a more favorable rating than most Third World states; much higher, for example, than Cuba, Tanzania, Algeria, Peru, and Libya. Even Transkei, a creation of South Africa, rates higher on the civil rights scale than Cuba, Algeria, and Tanzania. That South Africa can be deemed more 'free' than Tanzania is testimony to the intellectual tyranny of form over substance. Looking at its own ratings, Freedom House finally articulates its own concept of 'freedom' in the statement that 'capitalism by itself does not assure freedom. . . but socialism by itself seems to be positively detrimental[3]'. In other words, a multi-party system and a capitalist economy are more important than the provision of food, jobs, education or medical care. This survey graphically demonstrates how Western liberal notions of human rights can lead to the most ludicrous and incongruous conclusions.

It is precisely these flawed concepts of what human rights are about that have enabled the US to raise the banner of human rights at the same time that it opposes the New International Economic Order and Third World demands for a fairer distribution of global wealth. Inasmuch as economic rights are not considered basic, the US sees no contradiction whatsoever between supporting civil and political rights in the Third World, and opposing reforms in international institutions and terms of trade that *might* raise living standards in Third and Fourth World states. Indeed, one can go further and argue that there is an organic and causal relationship between the Third World's demands for a new international economic order and the American focus on human rights. Liberty becomes an answer to the Third World's demand for global equity.

Carter Administration's human rights campaign

So much for the roots of the Carter policy. What of its shortcomings and traps? Three shortcomings are readily obvious: the first is the campaign's excessive self-righteousness; the second is its cold-war orientation; the

[3]*Freedom at Issue*, January–February 1977, Number 39, p. 12.

third is its tendency to focus on the violations of others, and the related failure to examine Western patterns of organization which, in their own subtle ways, pose serious problems for human welfare.

A. *Self-righteousness.* The current campaign for human rights reflects an unmistakably ethnocentric and 'imperial' mentality. America is the center of the world, radiating goodness and universal norms. The rest of the world, the Third World in particular, is but a mere periphery. America calls the tune, while others are expected to follow. Foreign societies are to be measured, not by their own criteria or norms, but by America's 'timeless and abstract' ones. That this kind of attitude is a recipe for disaster in an era of quite tawdry sensibilities is one problem. Another is an irony that derives from America's own failure to ratify some of the major human rights conventions. As one Congressional Report notes, 'The U.S. record on ratification of human rights treaties is not good. . . . The United States, through its failure to become a party to all but a few of the human rights treaties, has become increasingly isolated from the development of international human rights law[4].' How a 'latecomer' to the field of human rights can preempt the issue as its own is a question which the Carter Administration has yet to confront. It would be too much to expect the rest of the world to welcome the latest convert to the faith as the new archbishop, without voicing some strong objections and a large measure of skepticism.

US self-righteousness is particularly problematic in cases involving Third World regimes. Westerners may forget – but non-Westerners should not be expected to do so – that a human-rights rhetoric of sorts was very much a part of the mythology and the ideological baggage of Western colonialism. Even when colonizing others, Europeans were fond of justifying their alien rule as a way of promoting human rights.

Since the non-Western world has for so long been on the receiving end of Western sermons and Western colonialism, and particularly because the two have been almost inseparable, it is a relatively easy matter for Third World rulers to dismiss the Western campaign for human rights as yet another form of Western interventionism motivated by the West's belief in its own 'more civilized' superiority. The Third World response transcends ideological orientation: it is asserted by Fidel Castro and the Shah of Iran. Invoking the right to self-determination, drawing upon deep wells of anti-Western sentiment, reacting against years of hearing Westerners speak the language of freedom while practicing their share of aggression, Third World leaders can easily withstand the charges which emanate from the West.

[4]United States House of Representatives, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Human Rights in the World Community*, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C.

What is worse, because of this historical background, the 'foreign connection' of local Third World dissidents can become a devastating liability. In most cases, the capacity of the dissidents to speak a local political idiom, to express their opposition to the state by appeals to their own nation's history and values, is a pre-condition of efficacy and success. A heavy dosage of Western self-righteousness can thus undercut prospects for a successful struggle against authoritarianism.

B. *Human rights and cold-war politics.* Second, it is often difficult to tell where the West's accustomed antagonism toward the Soviet Union ends and where genuine concern for human rights begins. The danger that the human-rights campaign will lose its moral credibility by resembling a pursuit of 'the cold war through other means' is all too real. The image of the Soviet Union as a threat to the West has been brought back to life; if the cold war lost respectability in the age of summitry and détente, it seems to be quite in vogue again. The American President promises to 'hang tough' in his negotiations with the Soviet Union and clearly strikes a receptive chord in his society. The Committee on Present Danger declares that talk of 'world order politics,' the devaluation of military forces, and the Third World 'threat' are all nothing but suicidal nonsense. The real antagonist, the Committee argues, is the Soviet Union - a state which understands only the language of force.

The West's renewed concern with the Soviet Union at this time is a complex phenomenon; at its roots lie deeply-felt psychological needs as well as standard geo-strategic concerns. The latter, more readily apparent and frequently discussed, are easy to understand. The Soviet Union is a major rival - in fact the only power that poses a serious military threat to Western security. Consequently, the Soviet Union is also the one power whose activities can be used to reaffirm the military's position and justify its claim on resources, after a decade of disillusionment with military interventions and of growing popular demands for fewer guns and more butter.

In this context of life-threatening geopolitical rivalry, the Third World doesn't count. Concern with the Third World as a threat to the West burst on the public consciousness in 1973 and 1974, with the deployment of the oil weapon, the Third World militancy at the United Nations, and India's explosion of a nuclear device. But the Third World was not, and by a strictly military logic could not be, a serious rival. For one thing, the issues between the West and the Third World are economic in nature, and hence do not lend themselves to military solutions. Moreover, even in the event that military intervention was needed, these issues don't seem demanding enough to warrant massive budgets and technological outlays. 'Police operations', such as the ones discussed in 1974 and early 1975 against the Arab oil states,

are minor things; for such excursions, a small military expedition would be enough. Soviet Russia remains the principal rival if new weapons are to be developed, and if the military and those sectors of the economy and educational system that are associated with it are to retain their role as guarantors of the 'survival of the West'. At any rate, Russia's greater willingness to venture outside its boundaries in the aftermath of Vietnam (to intervene by proxy in Southern Africa, for example), seemed to justify a hard line against the Soviet Union, to prevent the world from interpreting the Vietnam debacle as a failure of America's will and nerve.

Profound and real as they are, such geo-strategic concerns do not, however, suffice to explain the renewed ideological assault against the Soviet Union. To comprehend that, one has to look into deeper political and civilizational factors in the West. At a time of great uncertainty and complexity, when the distinctions between 'freedom' and 'tyranny', or between the 'free' and 'Communist' worlds, are no longer so clear-cut, to yearn for the cold war is one way to recapture innocence. To go back to these 'militant', 'principled' days is an antidote to today's cynicism and skepticism. To return is a way for the West, especially America, to rediscover its essence, to get back in touch with the things that make it so unique. For all its considerable problems, the cold war did provide a sense of purpose, for it drew lines between philosophically and ideologically different worlds.

However, these lines have been increasingly blurred by postwar developments. Intimate alliances between America and Third World tyrants, Soviet-American détente, the cynical Nixon-Kissinger policies, and revelations about CIA activities have all helped to smother once clear distinctions. If the 'West' as a cultural entity was once thought to represent unique civilizational values, that notion has now been clearly challenged at its roots.

Such disillusionment with the world of politics is only the tip of the iceberg, however; underneath lie deeper and more troubling questions sparked by a technological age. For, if the logic of the technostructure is indeed global – if, for instance, Mr. Donald Kendall of Pepsi-Cola can feel at home in Moscow, and if world-spanning multinational corporations are trans-ideological and seemingly indifferent to once deeply-held, and hotly-debated, political convictions – then surely yesterday's truths were naive and misguided.

The growing strength of Eurocommunism deepens Western malaise still further. The spectre of communist victories at the ballot box is now drawing close to home – not somewhere at the periphery of the world in poor, marginal societies, but in Italy, Spain, and France. This political development resurrects old fears of Soviet power, and revives doubts about liberal democracy's capacity to maintain itself in the face of inflation, unemployment, civil unrest, and heightened tensions between rich and poor. The

relative successes of Eurocommunism tempts its electoral and ideological rivals in Europe to take once again the ideological offensive against the Soviet Union. European voters are warned that communism is still a monolithic, hostile movement, and that when the chips are down local European communists will prove more loyal to their ideology than to their nationalism.

Such are the ways that liberty has been rediscovered in the context of East–West politics. The Carter human-rights campaign thus serves to redraw ideological lines obliterated by a cynical foreign policy, by the unifying power of technology, and by the mobility of multinational corporations, all of which mock the distinction between 'free enterprise' and 'planned economies'. A measure of simplicity is reintroduced into a world that desperately seeks it. Once again, the differences between social systems are asserted: one society punishes dissidents, while another allows a multitude of voices. Soviet dissidents themselves, notably Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andre Sakharov, have played a crucial role in the process of redrawing these lines. Solzhenitsyn's use of apocalyptic imagery about the decline of the West and the need for a new moral crusade turned him into an instant hero of the American Right. He spoke their language, warning that the West was 'on the verge of a collapse created by its own hands'; that freedom was indivisible and must triumph over pragmatism; that détente was a flimsy thing, a mere trick played on the naive and trusting Westerners (Solzhenitsyn, 1975). Sakharov ridiculed 'leftist–liberal faddishness' in the West, and the incapacity of Western intelligentsia to understand 'the tragic complexity of real life'. His appeals to the West were phrased in standard cold-war terms, importuning these nations to set aside their internal concerns, important as they are, in order to present a solid Western front against 'totalitarianism' (Sakharov, 1975):

> I am deeply convinced that the thoughtless, frivolous pursuit of leftist–liberal faddishness is fraught with great dangers. On the international level, one danger is the loss of Western unity and of a clear understanding of the ever-constant global threat posed by the totalitarian nations. The West must not under any circumstances allow the weakening of its stand against totalitarianism. There is a danger for each country of slipping into state-capitalist totalitarian socialism. These two threats are of course closely related. . . . In comparison with these problems, many of the day-to-day matters that are disturbing the ordinary man in the West are of slight significance. If he, his children, or his grandchildren ever live under a system even remotely resembling ours or the Chinese, they will understand – it isn't too late.

The dated rhetoric of the late 1960s was thus imbued with the authority and the moral backing of noted Soviet dissidents. If Soviet intellectuals could tell the difference between freedom and tyranny, then surely Westerners could do no less. Even Mr. Kissinger had to pay lip service to such rhetoric toward the end of his tenure. The final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – the so-called Helsinki Declaration – concluded in August of 1975, was a sign of things to come. Its provisions reflect a codifica-

tion of the status quo in Europe that Soviet Russia wanted; the quid pro quo was the provisions on human rights that the West insisted upon. The 'universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms' was acknowledged, and all participating states vowed to respect the 'freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief', to promote 'the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and other rights and freedoms all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his free and full development[5]'. In time, and particularly with a new administration in power in Washington, these standard phrases of international conferences would be brandished against the Soviet Union.

The struggle against an authoritarian Soviet bureaucracy by determined intellectuals and activists, and the related quest by East Europeans for greater autonomy from the tight grip of the Soviet Union, are obviously important issues. They speak to the desire for more private space, a more humane society, a more open system of governance. It is difficult not to be moved by the determined and admirable effort of those who take the risk of saying 'here and no more' in a society like the Soviet Union. We must hail their struggle while awaiting its slow and uncertain evolution. However, precisely because it is such a worthwhile struggle, it would be negligent and irresponsible to entangle this cause too deeply in cold-war politics or to use it cynically for the sake of 'shaming' another state (to paraphrase Mr. Moynihan). If we respect the efforts of others, we must surely appreciate the grave and awesome problems which those efforts involve. The least we can do for such courageous dissidents (and for ourselves) is to lend their struggle the dignity and the seriousness that it merits. Anything less demeans them, ourselves, and the issues raised by this cause.

C. *Setting one's house in order.* The issue of human rights is not exclusively a 'Southern' or a communist problem. Western discussions sound as though all is well in the house of the West, as though only in the Third World or the communist states is the effective exercise of human rights circumvented by socio-economic or political repression. While it is true that there is comparatively more direct violence in the Second and Third Worlds than in the First, the current campaign for human rights must also take cognizance of Northern violations as well. America's domestic experience with civil rights and racism affords a particularly illuminating example. It was assumed that discrimination against black Americans in housing, education, and employment was confined to the South. The generally more subtle and invidious northern (meaning the American north) abuses went largely unrecognized until the riots in the summer of 1967, because most Northerns smugly

[5]The proceedings at Helsinki are reprinted in *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Number 4, 1975.

believed that racism was an exclusively Southern problem. The same tendency can now be observed in Western pronouncements on human rights. But, rather like charity, 'well ordered crusades begin at home' (Hoffman, 1976–1977), and the Western countries should embody the doctrines they preach to others in their own lives. The police is surely repressive in Brazil, but Mayor Rizzo's Philadelphia has a few grim tales of its own. The sources of human misery vary from one culture to another; each society inflicts its own version of injustice, develops its own way of not seeing the suffering of its victims, builds up its own myths to maintain the claims of the winners.

It is easy for Westerners to be outraged by endless tales of non–Western repression and brutality, and simple for them to 'see' non–Western violations, but much harder to look into their own society, to puncture its myths and claims, to honestly confront the human and social costs of its own arrangements and evaluate the drift of its own history. Professor Rupert Emerson (1975) provides a sobering antidote to Western propensities to look with revulsion at Third World deviations from Western legal norms:

> Even aside from the fact that Western values have obviously no automatic applicability to other peoples, times, and climes, it would serve no useful purpose to attempt a listing of Western sins and shortcomings all of which are prominently spread on the public record, as are such virtues that the Western contribution may be held to have. . . . A staggering total of wealth has been spent and continues to be spent on wars and armaments when poverty and underdevelopment are the fate of most peoples including a substantial number of Americans. The viles of imperialism are too familiar to require elaboration, particularly at a time when anti-colonialism is a dominant global theme. The squandering of the world's limited resources and the pollution of the environment are becoming more and more evident. If the West has been the fountainhead of liberal constitutional democracy, it has also been the breeding ground of Fascism and Nazism.

President Carter's human rights campaign brings us face to face, then, with the differing and often hidden costs of social orders, especially with the capacity of some societies to conceal these costs under layers of civility and prosperity. The lesson which can be learned from critics of this campaign is that the introduction of morality and human rights into international politics cannot be controlled and selective. Other voices are destined to be heard, to add their own views and interpretations to the debate. Their motivations are sure to vary, and no doubt attempt to combine self–interest with morality. One may not agree with all of these voices, but it is folly to imagine that any one nation or outlook can single–handedly impose its own concept of order on others. Spokesmen for the Carter Administration may wish to emphasize human rights because it is, as they often put it, their 'strong suit'. But the rules of the international game are not set by one player alone, and no single player can constantly play his own suit. The attempt to abstract human rights from a broader, more complex agenda of problems which must be addressed is doomed to frustration – pragmatically, politically and intellectually – if only because other players (who may at times be solely

interested in stalling or disrupting the game) will select some other issue as *their* 'strong suit'.

Professor Emerson's passage makes the kind of linkages and interconnections that adequate concepts of human rights must make: between the war system and human rights; between economic justice and equity and human rights; and between justice to one's fellow citizens and also to fellow human beings who happen to reside outside the boundaries of one's own state.

Human rights in economic terms

Contrary to the Western liberal tradition, the socialist tradition has always tended to define human rights in economic rather than in political terms. The hallmark of socialist regimes, such as those in the Soviet Union and Cuba, is the attempt to establish a minimum 'floor' which will guarantee a basic standard of living for all members of the society.

Right to food. For the poor of the world, the primacy of economic rights cannot be overemphasized. One cannot make the standard liberal arguments about equality or liberty in opposition to such rights. Indeed, the contrary argument is far more persuasive: that to satisfy these basic human needs is to give meaning to the ideal of liberty, to anchor it in socio-economic rights, and to make real the proclaimed commitment to human rights. Perhaps the most basic economic right is the right to food. As Saul Mendlovitz recently told a Congressional committee, the right to food has become part of a 'new myth system' for the world community[6]. Though admittedly difficult to implement, the notion of a right to food challenges the smugness of an affluent, productive era. It asks a sophisticated, productive, enlightened community to guarantee each individual a minimum but fundamental right regardless of his or her talents, race, age, nationality. It gives the world community a way to demonstrate universal human solidarity by affirming the most elementary human right of all: the right to eat.

At present, the right to food, as Mendlovitz readily admits, is at best a moral claim; there is no machinery to enforce it; no centralized (nor even decentralized) authorities against whom such a claim can be asserted.

[6]United States House of Representatives, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on International Relations, *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Resources, Food and Energy*, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., June 1976, p. 117.

'Realists' may say that the time to propose a right to food and other basic economic rights has not yet dawned. But one can point to their selective realism. In a cruel era, where national governing authorities seem to be on a rampage, is it time to ask them to stop torturing dissidents and begin treating political opponents with due process? The case for economic rights is no more and no less realistic than the case for civil or political rights. It is far more 'realistic' to admit that these matters are decided, not on any objective grounds, but rather on grounds of sheer convenience. It is convenient for Western governments to speak of civil liberties, and troubling to confront the issue of economic rights.

For most socialist and Third World regimes, the situation is precisely the reverse. Their heads of state speak the language of egalitarianism abroad, while they defend systems of acute inequalities within their own boundaries. At the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), President Marcos of the Philippines was delegated to present the Manila deliberations of the Group of 77. Predictably, Marcos called for justice and interdependence, and for fairer ways of organizing interstate relations. But should we not ask why his own society embodies gross violations of the very same norms that he espouses at international conferences? For quite some time, the concern with Western dominance, combined with sympathy for the struggle of non-Westerners to break the West's hold on the rest of the world, made it tempting to look the other way where Third World violations were concerned. One did not want to play into the hands of reactionary critics of Third World regimes; the larger goal seemed worthy enough, and one did not want to deny it one's support. But to exempt the oppressed from moral judgment, or to allow their previous deprivations to provide a licence for newer and different forms of oppression, is neither morally nor politically persuasive. Unless movements for social change embody the kind of values they espouse, and unless the struggle itself constitutes the first step toward building a more decent and just social order, the entire quest is, alas, doomed to futility. A long trail of betrayed revolutions and abandoned causes bears witness to the fact that there are never solid guarantees of how any rebellion will turn out. The outcome will depend on the circumstances of history, on the quality and orientation of leadership, and on the coherence of the vision. And because that guarantee is always lacking, we must look to the particular struggle itself: its formative stage, the men and women who lead it, the ideas and visions which propel them, if we are to avoid yet another 'betrayed' quest, yet another revolutionary dream that speaks the language of justice and ends up replacing one set of elites – or countries – with another.

New International Economic Order. With OPEC's successful deployment of

the oil weapon and with the Declaration of the New International Economic Order, Third World leaders began to force the attention of the international community beyond the concept of economic rights *within* nations, to the goal of greater economic equity *among* nations. The call for a new international economic order has challenged some hitherto 'natural' facts of life; it has pushed the issue of equity to the forefront of world politics. Briefly, the main demands of the New International Economic Order focus on (1) inequality in the terms of trade between the raw materials of the Third World and the manufactured goods of the North; (2) access to the markets of the rich nations; (3) access to relatively cheap technology; (4) jealous assertion of national sovereignty on the part of Third World states over their resources and their right to regulate the activities of multinational corporations; (5) debt relief for debts estimated to be in the neighborhood of $160 billion; (6) a rise in official development assistance from the present 3·6% to 0·7% of the combined GNP of the rich nations. These are the specifics; the underlying ideological thrust is the attempt on the part of the Third World nations to challenge the ideology of laissez faire liberalism and the complacent belief that 'the market' is capable of distributing justice and fairness.

Certainly, the ambiguities involved in the New International Economic Order should be recognized; the heavy emphasis on 'state building' to the detriment of the society; an incredible obsession with acquiring the very latest weapons; fascination with imported technology; and the rise to power, in a manner all too familiar, of a group of *nouveaux riches* in states who claim to speak for the downtrodden of the world. But these ambiguities aside, and considering the alternative vision of how the rich nations want the world to look, the New International Economic Order is a landmark development.

But can its demands be met? Is the tackling of absolute poverty a 'manageable' undertaking? Isn't global poverty a bottomless pit bound to tax and outrun global capacities and resources? This is the crux of the 'triage' argument: that there is so much poverty and so few resources to go around that the best one can do is learn to see and hear the suffering of others without undue pain or guilt. Serious work by men like Nobel Laureates Wassily Leontief and Jan Tinbergen, as well as groups like the Overseas Development Council and the World Bank, indicates the absurdity of the triage concept, to say nothing of its callous disregard for human beings.

Some of the work surveyed is relatively precise and quite helpful. World Bank estimates contend that absolute poverty can be eliminated with an investment of $125 billion (1974 prices) stretched over a ten-year period. Food and nutrition would absorb $42 billion; education $25 billion; rural and urban water supply $28 billion; urban housing $16 billion; urban transport $8 billion; population and wealth programs $6 billion. The estimates are naturally rough and suggestive. As Roger Hansen (1977) of the

Overseas Development Council notes in an analysis of the feasibility of such a strategy, Official Development Assistance by the rich countries of OECD alone could do the job over a sustained period of time in the next 15–25 years, if that aid were channeled from middle-income countries to poor ones, and if it were directed to basic human needs – i.e. literacy campaigns, rural development, and the like.

The same nexus is the centerpiece of Wassily Leontief's important study for the United Nations (1976):

> To ensure accelerated development two general conditions are necessary: first, for reaching internal changes a social, political, and institutional character in the developing countries, and second, significant changes in the world economic order. Accelerated development leading to a substantial reduction of the income gap between the developing and developed countries can only be achieved through a combination of both these conditions. Clearly, each of them taken separately is insufficient, but when developed hand in hand, they will be able to produce the desired outcome.

The Leontief study is avowedly normative, and quite 'realistic'. Its aim is to reduce the 12:1 gap that now separates the rich from the poor countries, to a 7:1 ratio by the end of the century. Its aim is not utopian total equality, but a sufficient reduction in inequality to make a real difference to poor citizens of Third World societies. Its starting point is a genuine agricultural revolution in Third World societies themselves that increases agricultural production in the coming decades by an annual average of 5%. This task, the study notes, would entail land reclamation and irrigation, credit facilities, public and private investment and, above all, institutional changes that would make such a transformation possible. Land reform is an essential component of this strategy; so are 'incentives towards eliminating inefficiencies in the use of land, labor, and technology'.

Global changes in the terms of trade between rich and poor countries would supplement domestic agricultural reform. The report singles out the following: (a) a faster change in relative prices of primary commodities vis-a-vis manufactured goods; (b) a decrease in the dependence of developing countries in world exports of manufactured goods; (c) larger aid flows; (d) changes in flows of capital investment.

Roughly the same message is reiterated in the Tinbergen Study (1976). The two essential goals – to narrow income disparities and to abolish absolute poverty – are said to require at least three sets of measures: (i) increased transfer of resources from the industrialized to the poorer. Third World countries, with particular attention to the use of these resources to directly addressing the poverty problem; (ii) increased transfer of resources from the richer and advantaged minority within most Third World countries to the poor majority; (iii) revision of development strategies of most Third World as well as some industrialized countries to pay far more attention to

ensuring employment and minimal levels of *education, health, nutrition, shelter*, and *clothing*[7]."

Studies like these carry genuine hope for the future by providing the guidelines for positive politics and policies. Their conclusions leave the industrialized nations no excuse whatsoever to shrug their shoulders in defeat and write off hundreds of millions of people. While it is true that efforts to reduce inequity among nations sometimes seem to distribute money from the poor people in rich countries to the rich people in poor countries, as President Carter once put it, the studies referred to above prove that this need not be so.

Militarism and the right to survive

When ubiquitous arms build-ups are juxtaposed with pronouncements on human rights, the contrast underlines the absurdity of, say, seeking to protect citizens from arbitrary arrest, or even to provide them with food and jobs, as long as both superpowers (and many more than anxious emulators in the Third World) continue to accumulate massive arsenals of destruction. Because one of the most fundamental of all human rights is surely the right to survive, the world can hardly fail to be skeptical about rhetorical commitments to human rights which coexist with massive military expenditures but inspire only the most timid steps toward disarmament. On this score, the American position is less than convincing, and in fact is vulnerable to precisely those Soviet and Brazilian criticisms cited at the opening of this essay.

Militarization and the denial of human rights or social justice are intimately connected in two more tangible ways. First, staggering human and economic resources are expended on the war system every year; second, military forces within a number of Third World states have recently shown a pronounced tendency, nurtured by broader global forces and trends, to assume political power. Both developments illustrate the difficulty of upholding human rights in a world system where the obsession with military power is so consuming and widespread.

The useful data assembled by Ruth Leger Sivard (1977) on world military and social expenditures depict the arms race as 'a stampede, as the buying fever for newer, more powerful weapons spreads to all parts of the globe'. In that race, pride of place belongs, of course, to the two superpowers, who

[7] Emphasis in the original.

alone have accounted for two-thirds of the global military outlays over the last fifteen years. The data show an increasing gulf between 'war-oriented' and development policies. War-oriented research dwarfed other research efforts and preempted 'resources that might otherwise have been invested in the technology, capital infrastructure, and human capital on which the quality as well as the rate of economic development depend'.

The extent to which such expenditures of human talent as well as material resources undermine the capacity to meet basic human needs – and needs and rights can be used interchangeably here – is highlighted by Sivard's effort to show what a 5% reduction in the arms race (the sum of $17·5 billion) could do. She calculates that these same resources could alternatively be used to pay for: (1) A vaccination program to protect all infants from infectious diseases; (2) a program to extend literacy to all adults by the end of the century; (3) improved delivery of medical care to rural areas, through the use of medical auxiliaries; (4) increased aid to enable Third World nations to grow more of their own food; (5) minimum housing for the urban poor in the poorest countries; (6) food supplements for 200 million malnourished pregnant women; (8) 100 million new places in primary schools; (9) hygienic water supply systems for more than a billion people who now lack access to safe drinking water.

Hardened realists may dismiss Sivard's exercise as irrelevant to the cold world of geo-strategic interests. They may insist that welfare concerns such as these do not fall within the parameters of the game of nations. But these same so-called realists are also prone to accuse Socialist or Third World regimes of being indifferent to the 'rule of law' both within their own societies and in international life. Here again, however, the problem of selective moralizing intrudes; for, by the same logic, is not the insistence that all societies embody Western democratic norms a distortion of the cold game of nations, an introduction into it of equally 'inappropriate' demands and doctrines?

Second, a threat to human rights arises when the military seizes direct political power, particularly in Third World states. The factors that spawn military interventions in politics are doubtless complex. In some cases, civilian institutions and elites have failed to govern effectively; in others, disadvantaged minorities disproportionately represented in the military seize power in order to overthrow established patterns of ethno-stratification (e.g. the military in Syria is principally composed of the minority Alawite sect); in still other cases, there is a lingering tradition of warriors or officers as wielders of political power. All these may be strictly 'domestic' factors, but they are not the only ones: worldwide systemic factors are also involved. The global military culture which pervades the existing international system makes it legitimate, and sometimes seemingly essential, for officers to seize

political power. Just as a legally-minded culture aggrandizes the power of lawyers (witness the power of lawyers in the United States), so also a world military culture, in which the two most powerful nations are the leading disseminators of military skills and hardware, emphasizes the comparative advantage of the soldier.

Yesterday's more 'liberal' international system, dominated by Western norms and values, brought to power non-Western intellectuals who mastered the metropolitan symbols and values. The rising power of the military in developing societies – it is estimated that four out of every ten Third World states are now ruled by military forces – mirrors an unmistakable trend in world culture toward greater militarization. And whenever it has been established, military rule has almost invariably meant greater repression, greater unwillingness to allow dissent and open politics, and a more marked contempt for life and liberty. This holds for 'leftist' Ethiopian soldiers as well as for 'rightist' Brazilian officers.

The capacity of Western societies to sustain massive military establishments while preserving civilian control cannot be replicated in Third World contexts, where the boundary between military and civilian sectors is increasingly blurred. For quite some time, a peculiar doctrine, subscribed to by many Western analysts and policy-makers, dismissed the importance of the military's rising power in Third World states. Because the military was thought to be an efficient, modern sector in this view, its ascendance to political power was thus seen as a sign of modernization. The costs to civil liberties, human rights, and the quality of public life were thought to be rather marginal, for it was believed that military rulers were just like their civilian counterparts. It was never clear why the crushing of civilian politics in the Third World, which surely would not be so lightly taken in the West, was dismissed as of minor concern. The explanation probably lies in the presumed incapacity of Third World societies to produce decent politics anyway, and in the lure and logic of technology, which convinces outsiders that any sector which is modern enough to handle military equipment can successfully perform other tasks as well. This, of course, assumes that the task of politics is technical control, that order and hierarchy are its central virtues, that we should welcome the men in uniform because they have a surgical solution to the 'uncertainties' and confusions of public life. By this logic, Brazil becomes the ideal model for other Third World states, because it represents a system which, as Richard Falk points out in his discussion of 'brazilianation', circumvents the 'risks' of politics and substitutes for it the discipline and hierarchy needed for an inegalitarian economy[8].

[8]Richard A. Falk, A World Order Perspective on Authoritarianism, unpublished paper of the World Order Models Project (WOMP).

The domestic conditions that propel the military to power obviously vary from one state to another. But, given a militarized world system in which the military sector has so much pull and glamor, so alarming a claim on large public expenditures, and such an edge in technological development, it will continue to be quite difficult to check the power of the military within individual states. 'Atavistic' military interventions—Amin's in Uganda, among others—are not at issue here. This analysis applies, rather, to cases of the Brazilian and Indonesian type, where the military and the technocracy strike an alliance which diverts resources from social welfare to the military and from rural to urban areas—in other words, where the inspiration is a capital-intensive, high-technology vision of development. In such alliances, the military assumes the burden of 'pacifying' the population, banning labor unions, and freezing wages; the technocracy is then free to remake society in its own image. The aim is 'revolution from above', which requires inhibiting opposition or competition from other groups. (Hence the typical attacks on labor unions and the church.) The motivation is a desire to 'catch up' with the more advanced economies, and to enter the world market under more favorable conditions, without the inconvenience of domestic dissent. In short, the military secures stability on the home front, while the technocracy improves the society's position in the global pecking order.

In standard leftist arguments, this 'sub-imperial' position is always subsidiary to the main metropolitan centers of the world. But reality is not that simple, for the cases of Brazil and Iran demonstrate the existence of considerable tensions between these rising regional powers and the United States. These include tensions over nuclear ambitions, and economic tensions—manifest in negotiations over oil prices in the case of Iran, and in recent problems concerning subsidiaries of US-based multinational corporations in the case of Brazil. Finally, there is the issue of human rights, which both Brazil and Iran view as a strictly internal affair on which the US has no right to pass judgments based on its own standards.

In a nutshell, Brazil and Iran maintain that 'development' is an awesome task which overrides traditional Western notions of liberty. In this view, self-righteous pronouncements by modern advanced nations are a way of superimposing on the 'latecomers' to the world of modernization the standards, life-styles, and values of the first-arrivals whose own atrocities—at least the more blatant ones—now lie behind them. In effect, the advanced nations are accused of changing the rules of the game after triumphing in it, by virtue of the fact that as 'first-comers' to the modern world they managed to industrialize without having to meet 'harsh and demanding' international standards. Historically, the argument is pretty indisputable. No foreign reporters were on the scene to cover the way American settlers dealt with the native population, no TV cameras were on hand to flash in the endless

brutality of the strong toward the weak. The perpetrators of this earlier violence did not have to judge themselves by outside standards of civility and good conduct. Today, however, a world unified by communications denies societies and individuals alike the privacy enjoyed in previous centuries. Compared with the past victims of injustice, human beings no longer have to suffer in silence. If they stand up to oppression, others have an opportunity to listen and to extend a helping hand. The temptation to resist is thus enhanced, for as rebellion begins when suffering becomes a collective experience and, as Camus (1956) wrote in *The Rebel*, when the 'malady experienced by a single man becomes a mass plague.'

The material and ideological dikes erected by the militarized state against this kind of 'collective experience' are formidable indeed. The ideology of national security, wedded to the lure of industrialization, triumphs over the cause of liberty. Even time-honored symbols of national greatness–such as the restoration of the memory of Cyrus and the backdating of the calendar in Iran–are invoked against dissidents, adding the prestige of ancient symbols to the power of the modern industrial quest. By contrast, the cause of liberty is seen as pale and ineffective, imported and inauthentic. A dominant global culture, in which lethal technology and seductive weapons occupy such a prominent place, encourages the tightening of authoritarian rule. While the sermons of outside powers may preach the virtues of liberty, 'backward' states which wish to modernize in a hurry inevitably try to telescope history by leaping into the modern world as quickly as possible. A lax population must be 'disciplined' if it is to acquire rapidly enough the skills needed to compete in a technocratic international order. Technology becomes a fixation, at once the source of national nightmares and national redemption. If one's neighbors somehow ascend higher on the technological ladder, the threat to the society's material interest and national psyche can be quite troubling. Hence every state must acquire its own bombs, its own breeder reactors, must trust its fate to the militarists and the technocrats, for they alone are supposed possess the toughness, the training and the discipline to tackle the problems of the new era.

The centers of technological innovation and martial prowess, the sources of most of the world's weapons, and of the culture of weapons as well, are of course the superpowers. The United States is by far the most important entity here; it alone exports half the world's trade in arms; technologically it is, in Zbigniew Brzezinski's words (1976), the world's laboratory. Much has come out of that laboratory which has no doubt enhanced the human condition. However, the constant sophistication of weaponry, the starving of civilian technology, the emphasis on the bigger and the more centralized, are now having counterproductive effects on the genuinely positive achievements and contributions of that laboratory.

Only the most naive and patronizing would want to suggest that Third World rulers who import arms and inappropriately expensive technology are hopeless pawns, unsuspecting puppets on whom the West can dump its gadgets and goods. Far from it. Third World regimes make up their own minds; the days of blatant colonialism are gone, and gone too is the ability to blame Western imperialism for everything under the sun. But the US, as a global pace-setter and as a society which claims for itself such a moral mission in the world, bears a special responsibility. The example set by the US as the world's most 'successful' society is of considerable importance to the drift of events in that world. It is her concrete acts and choices that will ultimately sway others rather than the rhetorical commitments she makes.

We simply do not know for sure whether a serious US commitment to reverse the trend toward militarization would convince other nations to arrest the growth of their own military programs. Of one thing we can be sure, however: no other nation believes that the US has the right to lecture others on nuclear proliferation or the acquisition of arms, while her own military build-up proceeds without evident restraint. The US may speak the language of Lockean liberty, but she certainly gives every indication of believing in a Hobbesian world.

Other nations, anxious to justify their own behavior in pursuit of their own interests, are quick to identify any gap between the moral rhetoric and amoral politics of others. Consider the following statements made by a number of world leaders to justify their own military ambitions. From the Shah of Iran we hear: 'If every upstart in the region acquires atomic bombs, then Iran must have them as well.' Muhammed al Quaddafi of Libya foresees the 'routinization' of atomic weaponry, predicting that: 'Atomic weapons will be like traditional ones, possessed by every state according to its potential. We will have our share of this new weapon.' From Prime Minister Desai of India comes a justifiable attack on those who pile up their own weapons while asking others to renounce them: 'I can't be a party to people having large atomic weapons in any amount and saying that others shouldn't have them[9].' These examples are not unique. Cumulatively, they reflect the pervasive militarization and the vicious logic of the state system. In particular, they indicate how difficult it is for societies at the center to convince others of the need to renounce those very things with which the major powers in the world have hitherto dominated.

The belief that technology is 'value-free', with no accompanying political logic of its own, is strikingly insensitive to the established relation between technics and civilization. The important political choices of the contem-

[9]Passages quoted in *The New York Times*, 29 May, 1977.

porary era are dictated by the logic of deadly weapons, massive and cumbersome technology, and terrifying forms of energy. It is not easy to make the case for freedom in a techno-political order of this kind. Governments understandably anxious to avoid catastrophic errors (or who so claim, in any case), will repress their opponents because the stakes are so large. In such contexts, the language and imperatives of survival can be expected to prevail over appeals for liberty. It is in this domain that the fate of human rights will be determined. The nexus between the war system and technology is our principal trap. Its bequest is the 'war society' which envelops us, making the boundaries between what is civilian and what is military increasingly difficult to detect. Robert Nisbet, an able conservative sociologist, interprets (1975) the lure of military society as a sign of political and social breakdown. Supplying its own momentum and possessing an independent ideology, militarism has managed to permeate civilian society with obviously profound and perhaps irreversible consequences:

> War and the military are without question among the very worst of the earth's afflictions, responsible for the majority of the torments, oppressions, tyrannies, and suffocations of thought the West has for long been exposed to. In military or war society anything resembling true freedom of thought, true individual initiative in the intellectual and cultural and economic areas, is made impossible: not only cut off they threaten to appear but, worse, extinguished more or less at root. Between military and civil values there is, and always has been, relentless opposition. Nothing has proved more destructive of kinship, religion and local patriotism than has war and the accompanying military mind. Basic social institutions can, on the incontestable record, survive depression, plague, famine, and catastrophe. They have countless times in history. What these and related institutions cannot survive is the transfer of their inherent functions and authorities to a body such as the military, which has . . . its own dominant values, symbols, constraints, and processes of consensus.

If Nisbet's remarks apply to the Western world, with its relatively democratic tradition and its established doctrine of civilian control over the military, they apply still more grimly to other societies. To address oneself to the issue of human rights without tackling this question is only to scratch the surface, to mistake symptoms and manifestation for deeper, more deadly realities.

Toward a just world order concept of human rights

Most discussions of human rights deliberately foster the notion that political freedoms and economic rights to a significant extent represent mutually exclusive goals, and that therefore individual societies are inevitably forced to emphasize one approach at the expense of the other. This essay argues, on the contrary, that political and economic rights are merely different sides of the same coin. In fact, the passages quoted at the beginning of the essay

suggest just how counterproductive it is in practical terms, and how insensitive in cultural terms, to pursue one interpretation of human rights without the other.

Barrington Moore (1966, 1972) has written that the quest for liberal democratic politics and rights is a 'long and certainly incomplete struggle to do three closely related things: (1) to check arbitrary rules, (2) to replace arbitrary rules with just and rational ones, and (3) to obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of rules.' While much of this essay is critical of these liberal concepts of human rights, I nevertheless firmly believe that the accomplishments of liberalism must be maintained, and I therefore totally reject a certain fashionable argument about the irrelevance of political liberty. That argument is advanced by the left, on the ground that liberty is an unaffordable luxury when one wants to realize socio-economic justice[10]. It is advanced by the right as well on the ground that these freedoms lead to chaos when permitted in inappropriate contexts and cultures[11]. I find both arguments unpersuasive; equally unpersuasive is a still newer argument which burst on the public scene in the early 1970s, and has since won the support of numerous analysts of contemporary affairs. This is the contention that the crises of the 'new world order'—overpopulation, nuclear proliferation, ecological threat—can only be surmounted by 'iron governments'. Robert Heilbroner (1974) expresses this sentiment when he asserts that the contemporary milieu will rally support for leaders and governments 'capable of halting the descent into hell'. More important, this argument is now part of the ideological baggage of rulers such as Marcos of the Philippines, the Shah of Iran, the Brazilian military. However, these arguments notwithstanding—indeed, precisely because of the very dangers these arguments cite—I believe the case for open liberal politics is as compelling as ever, and that liberty remains the best 'response to the fact that we live in a world of uncertainty in which nobody can claim to have found the grail of ultimate wisdom' (Dahrendorf, 1975).

By the same token, equally unpersuasive are efforts to play off political freedoms against rising demands for basic economic rights. The fundamental thesis of this paper is that liberal freedoms, like economic freedoms, are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for building a decent social order, particularly in an age of increasing ecological scarcity.

The opposition to furthering economic rights is predictably portrayed as an appeal to liberty, and as a reaffirmation of the 'trickle-down' effect. Then, too, there is the standard argument that egalitarian claims against the rich are unworkable; that equality is not of this world, that its pursuit will bring

[10] This recurring theme in leftist discourse is thoughtfully refuted by Michael Walzer (1970).
[11] This is the position taken by George Kennan (1977).

in its train the twin evils associated with egalitarian pursuits throughout history: a decline in liberty and a decline in excellence and quality. In this view, equality is a radical force that knows no limits: give them an inch and they will take a mile; satisfy the most basic aspirations and the egalitarian tide will bring down the West's liberty, destroy its productivity, and usher in a new dark age.

But this apocalyptic image does not accurately reflect the way choices present themselves in the real world. The elimination of income differentials is not the issue at stake. Inequalities will persist in any order: banish one form of inequality and another – more subtle, more difficult to detect at first – will arise. Take away private property and inequality will creep in through unequal access to state power. This has been the lesson of socialist and communist experiments the world over, and there is no use dodging it or wishing it away. The phenomenon of the 'new class' in socialist orders is a sobering one; in its way, it lends credence to the conservative contention that inequality is built into the human condition.

That inequality will be with us is indisputable; the political and moral question is the degree and extent of inequality. No one advocates that Bangladesh's income be made equivalent to America's, or that Chad become another Sweden. To pose the issues on such a grand and abstract level as the desirability of human equality is to mystify them, and to suggest, in effect, that the prevailing order may as well stand by default because the alternatives to it are so difficult to visualize, let alone bring about. A more realistic approach to economic rights is to focus on changes in the present world system which can bring about an acceptable improvement in human welfare by raising living standards for the nearly one billion impoverished people – a quarter of the human race – who reside, for the most part, in the lowest income countries of the South.

Finally, I believe that a concept of human rights which is genuinely appropriate to a just world order must go even beyond the attainment of basic political and economic rights. No concept of human rights is really sufficient unless it includes the freedom to survive without constant threats of mass annihilation and freedom from racial discrimination. To put it somewhat differently, unless the cause of human rights is pursued in an integrated fashion on all these political, economic security and social fronts, more narrowly conceived attempts will inevitably fail to produce meaningful results. On the contrary, in the long run one-sided efforts will merely serve to undermine the political credibility of their proponents and/or the legitimacy of their particularistic values. This is the lesson of President Carter's human rights campaign, with its single-minded focus on political freedoms, and hence its varied reception in different parts of the world.

To integrate all these strands of the human rights cause will be neither

easy, automatic, nor without its compromises and tradeoffs, particularly within the present international system based on sovereign nation-states. The civil and political rights that concern libertarians; the economic rights that predominate in socialist thought and Third World settings; popular aspirations for demilitarization – all inevitably come up against the logic of the state system: its power as well as its limitations.

Nevertheless, there is increasing reason for optimism even within the constraints of the existing system. Save for the most diehard believers in national sovereignty – Afrikaaners who want the world to go to hell, citizens in rich countries willing to turn their backs on the poor, fanatic Third World nationalists who believe the state is the only instrument capable of dealing with the outside world – a more or less universal consensus seems to be evolving on the limits of national sovereignty, particularly where human rights are concerned.

It is ever more clear to people of every nation that the maximalist claims of the nation-state – 'this is our wealth we will keep it', 'these are our dissidents we will treat them as we wish' – are absurd if pursued too far. President Carter generated a great deal of enthusiasm when he claimed that any state's abuse of its citizens' rights was not solely its own concern but the concern of others too. In a different context but in the same spirit, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (1977) has written that 'South Africa is an independent state. It is not a colony of anyone, and within the boundaries of the Republic there are no colonies to be granted independence. But its organized denial of human rights to all but 17 per cent of its people on the grounds of their race, make South Africa's "internal affairs" a matter of world concern.'

Though Carter and Nyerere preside over radically different societies, and though both are trustees of the concept of national sovereignty, each is clearly recognizing limits to the rights of the state. Both assert that there comes a point at which the claims of the state run afoul of global standards; at this point, they would agree, arguments about 'cultural relativity' must stop, and minimum global standards concerning human governance must come to the fore.

No realistic discussion of human rights can ignore the conflicts between cultural relativism and universal norms, between the logic of state sovereignty and the principles of a truly just world order. However, tentative guidelines do emerge from the Carter and Nyerere examples. While it would be folly to assume too great a degree of consensus on human rights (or on anything else), it does seem possible to identify a certain 'core of rights', a set of global common denominators which pertain to the effective exercise of human rights at this juncture of world history. They are:

1. The right to survive; hence the concern with the war system and with nuclear weaponry.

2. The right not to be subjected to torture.
3. The condemnation of apartheid; it is accepted that other societies violate racial equality but that South Africa's blatant, officially sanctioned and codified racism is particularly intolerable.
4. The right to food.

Other rights are sure to be added, but the precepts above come close to embodying the maximum feasible consensus at this time. The first 'right' is universally felt; it is a 'non-negotiable' minimum. The second right, though seen in the present context of world politics as a 'liberal right', clearly embodies a universal yearning. There is something particularly repugnant about torture, about one man inflicting suffering on helpless beings who cannot resist. The brutality and the cowardice of the act makes the campaign against torture both morally compelling and politically feasible at this time. At first glance, apartheid seems to be a more 'particular' concern, as only the policy of a minority regime in Southern Africa. But both apartheid in South Africa and the politics of the white Rhodesians so blatantly negate the notion of human equality as to pose fundamental challenges to human capacities for justice and fairness. To eliminate apartheid is not to end all racial discrimination but to commit ourselves to doing so. It is to say that even in this cynical and unequal world, checkered as it is with all manner of racial, cultural, and economic inequalities, certain forms and degrees of inequality are simply intolerable. The fourth right, the right to food, is both very old and very new. Basic tribal units honored it, deeming it an inalienable right for all members of the community. Centuries of progress, the tendency to organize larger and larger units, to devote resources to 'higher' goals—leisure, transportation, the war system—have obscured that right. Its rediscovery expresses a certain minimum commitment to the less fortunate.

To assert this set of rights at this time is to awaken the sociological and political imagination to more humane ways of governance, to suggest that even in a world riddled with differences, a certain common core of values, concerns, and rights can be discovered.

Human rights and system change at the global level

No amount of external meddling can construct just and equitable social arrangements in a particular society, create the foundation for a just state, or decree fair ways of distributing the social product. Vigorous indigenous forces must themselves promote such goals. The role of external intervention by individual states is complex. We should, of course, be fearful of

intervention by individual states, for such actions are always motivated more by concern for the intervenor's perceived national interest than for the needs of citizens within other polities. At the same time, the four-point ideology of human rights suggested above can certainly be helpful if promoted by an appropriate consort of states, international organizations, and social forces.

On the political level, the possibilities for world community intervention, necessarily limited at this point, can at least provide a margin of needed help which may serve to remind dissident groups within national societies that they are not adrift or alone. Assistance to exiles, for example, is absolutely essential if humane politics are to remain alive, and if potential dissidents are to risk rebellion or oppression. It is doubtful whether outside interventions, particularly of the rhetorical type, can assume the burden of bringing down authoritarian regimes. However, when a particular system depends on outside sources of support for credit, markets or military assistance, it is clearly important to cut off these forms of external aid – if only to undermine the political legitimacy of those in power.

On the economic level, no amount of external transfer is sufficient to put countries on their feet. Ultimately, each society must determine its particular way to provide fairly for the welfare of its own citizens. World Bank estimates tell us that a mere 2% transfer of income from the upper classes in Third World societies to the bottom 40% over a 25-year period would solve the problem of absolute poverty. But given the stacked political deck in most Third World states, the prospects for redistribution on such a scale are not bright at the present time. Most governments either lack the necessary normative commitment, or else they fear that cuts in services and higher taxes will provoke enough middle and upper class dissatisfaction to topple their own regimes. The fate of Allende's experiment is a reminder of what can happen to political leaders who threaten the ways of the rich. Given the drastically skewed distribution of the political and economic resources in most Third World societies, and the state's function as a protector of upper class interests, it is unrealistic to expect the rich to underwrite massive programs of redistribution and societal services – not in the near future, at any rate.

It is here that global reforms and foreign transfers can help to promote human rights as they are broadly conceived. Though not sufficient, such transfers may be a necessary ingredient in developmental strategies which aim to meet minimum human needs. In other words, international transfers can serve as incentives for Southern elites to tackle the needs of the poor by putting new resources at their disposal and thus increasing their capacity to maneuvre and entertain new options. As skeptics will note, there is no guarantee that increased income to Southern elites – as a result of shifts in

the terms of world trade, or outright foreign aid – will filter down to the poor. And in a way they are right; there is no absolute guarantee for anything of the kind. New income can be spent on the purchase of weapons or other prestige items which appeal to Third World elites obsessed with catching up with the West. New funds can be used, as in Brazil, Iran, the Philippines, and in Sadat's Egypt, to increase the relative share of the rich. Such are the tough, sobering and tragic realities of Third World states. These realities should be recognized, but they should not be allowed to justify inaction.

In the final analysis, it is up to each Third World society to deal with its own problems on its own political and economic terms, to replace uncaring, uncommitted elites with more just rulers and to construct its own preferred social order. The world community's role is to provide progressive local groups with tangible proof that they do live in a world that not only sets standards for their political conduct, but also sets minimum standards for their economic needs. Western opinion is often curiously insensitive to this kind of paradox. It thinks it is legitimate to intervene in the politics of Third World societies by lecturing them on how they should treat their dissidents, but pleads the principle of 'nonintervention' when the issue of Third World poverty comes up. This is a strange contradiction: it postulates a world-order logic based on global norms in the first set of cases, but promotes the logic of national primacy in the second set. This approach postulates the existence of specific responsibilities to the world community on the one hand, but then proceeds to dilute the case for global norms when it comes to the rights of poor states. This is a 'cheap' kind of world-order logic that others can easily rebel against, as indeed they have been doing of late. It demands a great deal – laws against terrorism, self-exile from the nuclear club, cooperation at the UN, 'reasonable' demands when it comes to the price of raw materials, adherence to Western legal norms – but it gives very little in return. According to this logic, the mischief of Third World regimes is of 'global' concern, but starvation is an 'internal' matter. It is too eclective a logic to work. States are told what they can and can't do in the name of world order, but they are not invited to participate in its construction. The architects are trained and the building blocks manufactured in the West. Other peoples are simply expected to inhabit a world made by Western architects and builders, on terms decreed by Westerners according to Western norms.

If the above logic is neither persuasive nor workable, how can others be engaged in the construction of a collective order? Clearly, that order must engage their energies, answer their needs, and demonstrate its concern for their priorities. Otherwise, non-Westerners will continue either to rebel against or to withdraw from the Western-dominated order, rejecting its laws and demands, harassing it whenever they can, or simply slipping into a marginality which breeds violence, anomie, resentment, and hate. The

subculture of ghetto violence has a global equivalent. If marginalized, ignored or deprived, states too can snap the links that tie them to outside values and norms, devour their own citizens, harass others, and attack the global order at whatever strategic points may be accessible.

Rebellion is not solely a function of poverty and material deprivation; it can also be a product of affluence. The case of radical German youth demonstrates that the rich too can rebel against injustice; that the complacency of affluence, stripped of a normative commitment to something which transcends individual success and material comfort, can strain the fabric even of wealthy orders.

Material deprivation – whether suffered by its victims, or rejected by those who are better off but still repelled by poverty – does not explain all violence in contemporary life, but surely accounts for much of it. Unless that material deprivation is tackled, the underprivileged cannot be expected to believe that the dominant social order, domestic or global, really cares for them above and beyond a desire to pacify them and confine their violence within acceptable geographical limits through a perfected machinery of law and order.

If the moral incentive to enhance the life chances of over one billion human beings is not a sufficiently compelling argument for a genuine global commitment to eliminate absolute poverty, the quality of world order is a supporting rationale. Unless something is done to demonstrate that kind of commitment, the 'world order' that our leaders and statesmen are constantly invoking will remain nothing more than a quest for stability, and that quest will make it difficult for the managers of order to enlist enthusiasm, tap idealism or unleash creative energy. Under the best of circumstances, stability would reign but the quality of order would deteriorate; order would have to justify itself on purely self-serving grounds.

Finally, it must be noted, there is a new consensus emerging concerning globally applicable standards of human rights. The new consensus is based on the view that the construction of a viable world order entails addressing political and economic rights and the taming of the war system; and on the view that there is growing interdependence and mutual vulnerability in the world, and that the symbols and substantive issues that persuade and move must reflect the diversity of the world system and, at the same time, basic human rights for each individual on the face of the earth.

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